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# waterNEWS



Your source for all things water

## Update to watering rules nears completion

If you've lived in San Antonio very long, you know our city boasts a unique, vibrant culture. And just like breakfast tacos and Fiesta medals, water conservation has long been part of our "Puro San Antonio" vibe.

For decades, San Antonio's conservation ordinance has helped us work together to save and extend our water resources. But despite most people following the rules, water demand has started to increase — especially over the last two summers of record heat and severe drought.

To make conservation rules more effective, efficient, and fair, SAWS is proposing changes and has been listening to your feedback to fine-tune those efforts.

Recommended changes to reduce water demand include:

- For watering rule violations, apply a fee on violators' bills instead of a court citation.
- During severe drought, establish a high water use surcharge.
- Limit drip irrigation to watering one day a week.
- Improve the quality of new home irrigation systems.

### How will these changes affect customers?

For those already following the rules and using modest amounts of water, not much will change. If you have an irrigation system, you will need to change settings to match new watering hours.

Those who live outside the City of San Antonio's citation authority will be subject to the same rule enforcement as all SAWS customers. And high water users — those in the top 5% — will need to use less to avoid the high use surcharge.

SAWS will soon wrap up public input and present the proposal to SAWS' Board of Trustees for consideration. The new rules would then need to be approved by San Antonio City Council before taking effect.

As a reminder, we're still in drought and Stage 2 watering rules are in place. That means landscape watering with a sprinkler, irrigation system or soaker hose is allowed only from 7-11 a.m. and 7-11 p.m., one day a week, based on the last number of your street address. You can still hand-water with a hose-end nozzle any time.

You can track your own household water use by logging in at [saws.org/myaccount](https://saws.org/myaccount).

And if you haven't weighed in yet on the proposed ordinance changes, you can still let us know what you think at [wateringrules.com](https://wateringrules.com).



## WaterSaver coupons help you bid farewell to an always-thirsty landscape

Inspired to make changes to your landscape? Now is the time to liven up your yard with SAWS WaterSaver Landscape Coupons!

Through Oct. 15, SAWS residential customers can apply for up to four \$100 WaterSaver coupons to replace part of your water-demanding grass with lush, drought-tolerant garden beds. That's \$400 in savings!

Whether your yard is sunny or shady, our approved plant selection has you covered — and our Plant by Number coupon designs will help you plan for your specific site conditions.

For each coupon, you must remove at least 200 square feet of grass where you will place your purchased plants. You must also cap any sprinkler heads in the area where you install your new bed. By doing so, you may also qualify for our residential irrigation design rebate, which may further lower the cost of your outdoor project.

Call 210-704-SAVE to schedule a free irrigation consultation before you start your landscape coupon project. Get all the details and apply online at [GardenStyleSA.com/coupons](https://GardenStyleSA.com/coupons).

Join the MySAWS Conversation:



## Event Calendar

### Starving Artist Art Show

**April 6-7**

La Villita Historic Arts Village  
418 Villita St.

[lavillitanantonio.com](http://lavillitanantonio.com)

### Wellness at the Tobin: Yoga

**April 13**

Tobin Center  
100 Auditorium Circle

[tobincenter.org/wellness](http://tobincenter.org/wellness)

### Viva Botanica

**April 20**

San Antonio Botanical Garden  
555 Funston Place

[sabot.org](http://sabot.org)

### Beginner Bird Walk

**April 27**

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center  
10750 Pleasanton Road

[mitchelllake.audubon.org](http://mitchelllake.audubon.org)



**Customer Service and 24-hour Emergency**

**210-704-SAWS (7297)**

[saws.org/waternews](http://saws.org/waternews)

## Parra envisions SA's water future through engineer's eyes

by Jeanie Tavitias

For as long as he can remember, Eduardo Parra has been fascinated with water — from the mechanics of how it behaves to how we can influence that behavior. That fascination helped steer him to a career in civil engineering and hydraulics — and eventually serving on the SAWS Board of Trustees.

The oldest of four children, Parra grew up in in Maracaibo, Venezuela, a city he describes as “very much like Texas — with a lot of oil and cattle.” His parents, who worked and studied at the same time, “wanted a good education for all of us.”

“My mother would drive us (to school) and back every day,” says Parra, recalling his dad’s sage advice: “He said your only job is to study.”

Beaming with pride, he remembers watching his dad graduate as a civil engineer, knowing he’d follow in his footsteps, mostly. “My dad dealt more with transportation like roads and highways. But I was more into water,” says Parra.

That thirst flourished in college in Venezuela, followed by the opportunity to study for his master’s in hydraulics and coastal engineering in the U.S. After grad school, Parra returned to Venezuela to teach and work with his dad’s firm.

Before he passed away, Parra says his dad encouraged him to close the company and find a job elsewhere. Those wise words steered him to Houston in 2005, where he worked his way up from intern to principal engineer. Twelve years later, he and his wife

started their own engineering firm.

“We’re all either related or longtime friends,” says Parra, adding that it’s a dream come true. “I love what we do, being able to influence the infrastructure of San Antonio and Central Texas.”

Engineering aside, music also played an important role in Parra’s life. Memories of playing classical guitar alongside his brother while his sisters danced make him chuckle.

“(My brother) was really gifted. I was just persistent,” Parra said, admitting that he

seldom picks up the guitar now. But he does dream about performing on stage someday.

“I want to take singing lessons to eventually be good enough to sing in the choir at the opera,” says Parra, now in his 10th year on the board of Opera San Antonio.

In the meantime, the self-described “water geek” is thrilled to serve as SAWS’ Board secretary.



“It’s an honor to be able to help influence some of the decisions — or at least share why I see things one way or the other — that help secure the water future for San Antonio,” says Parra.

As for his vision for the future, Parra says continuing our stellar work in conservation, as well as securing new water resources, will help San Antonio thrive in a sustainable way.

“Making sure we’re planning to have water for 2055, as well as continue maintaining our water and sewer lines and plants, so we get the most that we can from them.”

## Summer is coming — is your garden ready?

Spring moves fast in South Central Texas, with the first hot days showing up before many trees have even sprouted leaves. Now’s the time to start prepping your landscape for summer:

- Start mowing. Winter rains contributed to a bumper crop of winter weeds; mowing helps keep them from setting seed.

- Resist “weed and feed” fertilizer. March is too early to fertilize anyway.
- Apply compost now while your grass is still dormant.
- Trim freeze-damaged perennials to about 3 inches above ground.

For more landscaping tips and weekly watering advice, visit [GardenStyleSA.com](http://GardenStyleSA.com).